United Nations A/68/PV.79

General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

79th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 26 March 2014, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Touré (Guinea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 138 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General (A/68/716/Add.6)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I should like, in keeping with established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/68/716/Add.6, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/68/716/Add.5, the Marshall Islands and Papua New Guinea have made the payment necessary to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in that document?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 30 and 112 (*continued*)

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/68/729)

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/68/722)

Mr. Dockendorf (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to welcome the statement made by Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak, Permanent Representative of Croatia, whose delegation was the past Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (see A/68/PV.78). I thank him and his predecessor, Ambassador Ranko Vilović, for their commitment throughout 2013. We take this opportunity to wish Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota the best of luck during the coming year and assure him of our full cooperation, particularly on the occasion of the first annual session of the Commission in June this year.

Luxembourg aligns itself with the statement that was made by the observer of the European Union (see A/68/PV.78).

In 2013, the Guinea country configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), which Ambassador Sylvie Lucas is honoured to chair, has begun its third year of operations. The PBC's efforts in Guinea were concentrated on organizational support for elections that took place on 28 September, after an inclusive political dialogue facilitated by the United Nations. That success was also the result of cooperation between the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa, the United Nations Development Programme and the funds and programmes of the United Nations, the European Union, bilateral partners, civil society, in particular women's groups, and the Guinea country configuration of the PBC. The Peacebuilding Fund, to which Luxembourg contributes annually, has played a leading role in Guinea, through the provision of rapid, flexible and catalytic financing to United Nations efforts.

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In 2014, the configuration is ready to continue its support for national peacebuilding priorities, two of which are strengthening the capacities of the new National Assembly and giving support to reform of the judiciary and non-army security services. It is also willing to give further support to strengthening the capacity of the interim national reconciliation committee, as well as reconciliation initiatives at the local community level. In the context of employment policy for women and youth, the configuration should renew its efforts in support of resource mobilization, particularly including through cooperation with the World Bank and the African Development Bank, and it should continue its advocacy for equitable and transparent management of the country's natural and mining resources aimed at helping to create sustainable jobs for women and young people.

We value the General Assembly's annual debate on the Peacebuilding Commission because it enables us to reflect frankly on the PBC's failures, successes and future challenges. In 2015, the peacebuilding architecture established in 2005 will be reviewed and improved. Luxembourg is convinced that we must recognize the true worth of the Peacebuilding Commission's potential as an advisory body and an informed and constructive support to countries emerging from conflict.

There is a political dimension to peacebuilding and strengthening the State that the Peacebuilding Commission, with its dual mandate from the General Assembly and the Security Council, is ideally positioned to address. We cannot ignore the realities of countries' political economies, the root causes of conflicts and the risks represented by corruption, a ruling class inimical to development, political, economic and social exclusion, organized crime and winner-take-all political cultures. Sustainable peacebuilding requires the establishment of even-handed political processes and settlements, adequate and accountable national institutions and the international community's ongoing support and attention.

We welcome the efforts made by the fragile States, meeting within the Group of Seven Plus, and the conclusion of national agreements within the New Deal framework. Mutual responsibility exists not only between a fragile State's Government and its international partners but also between the Government and its citizens. Peacebuilding requires arriving at a new social contract. The State must be able to comply fully with the regulatory functions that give it its legitimacy. It must assume its responsibilities for promoting and protecting human rights and the rule of law, and for delivering public services to its citizens. As others have emphasized, genuine national ownership is essential. Peacebuilding processes must be inclusive and should reflect a genuine national consensus. It is through its support for establishing inclusive partnerships at the national level that the Peacebuilding Commission can have a genuine comparative advantage.

The Peacebuilding Commission should also broaden its activities in support of the regional dimension of peacebuilding. The Mano River Union is an excellent example, since three of the four countries in the region — Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone — are on the Commission's agenda. In October, they adopted a security strategy for their shared borders, developed with the support of the United Nations Office for West Africa and after consultations with the PBC.

We hope that these suggestions will help the Commission to have an increasingly relevant response to the requirements of peacebuilding in the countries it supports and beyond.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Ambassador Drobnjak of Croatia, the outgoing Chair of the organizational committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, for his delegation's efforts in preparing the report before us today (A/68/729). We also look forward to working with the Ambassador Patriota of Brazil, the current Chair.

Egypt aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Tunisia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement's peacebuilding caucus (see A/68/PV.78).

The United Nations peacebuilding architecture is witnessing significant developments, notably the transition by the end of this month of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone into a United Nations country team that will be dealing with national priorities in the future. The transition represents an opportunity for the Peacebuilding Commission to liaise between United Nations teams on the ground in countries where peacebuilding assignments have been accomplished and the Organization's principal bodies — chiefly the Security Council and the General Assembly — in order to take advantage of the accumulated experience of the Commission and

its outreach to international partners, so as to prevent those countries from relapsing into conflict.

In 2013, United Nations peacebuilding witnessed developments in the Central African Republic, where the course of events has subsequently demonstrated the importance of the role played by regional and subregional organizations in handling such crises according to a comprehensive regional perspective. Such an approach can bring new momentum to peacebuilding efforts in light of the challenges faced by African nations in the region generally.

Egypt emphasizes the importance of ongoing efforts to improve the working methods of the Peacebuilding Commission to enable it to be more effective and responsive to the real needs of countries on the ground, and in that regard would like to reiterate the following: first, the importance of national ownership of peacebuilding programmes in order to enable them to respond better to national priorities and to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach; secondly, the importance of consolidating cooperation frameworks with international and regional financial institutions, and to search for innovative and sustainable solutions to funding problems facing peacebuilding programmes, while meshing fully with national priorities; and thirdly, broadening coordination between the Peacebuilding Fund and international partners, especially the International Monetary Fund and the African Development Bank, as well as the United Nations agencies working on the ground to increase the effectiveness of resources allocated by the Fund.

Egypt stresses the relevance of the recommendations made in the report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its seventh session (A/68/722), particularly with regard to activating the role of the general membership of the Commission, which is selected from a number of the principal organs of the United Nations in order to enhance communication and coordination between the Commission and those organs, in particular the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, and to advocating partnerships aimed at providing sustainable funding for peacebuilding programmes, especially those with international and regional financial institutions.

The ongoing process of developing the working methods of the Peacebuilding Commission should keep in view the ultimate goal of increasing the Commission's effectiveness and credibility in performing its functions, and to further mainstream efforts in the peacebuilding architecture by building on lessons learned, with a special focus on priority themes related to peacebuilding, such as national reconciliation and sustainable economic development in the countries on the Commission's agenda.

Egypt is working in coordination with the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and the Chair of the organizational committee of the Peacebuilding Commission in order to enhance coordination and complementarity between the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and the African Union, aimed at furthering peacebuilding activities in the six African countries on the Commission's agenda. We reiterate our emphasis on the importance of national ownership and have been working to that end on an initiative for hosting an African Union centre for post-conflict reconstruction and development, aimed at enhancing African capabilities in those areas.

We will also coordinate with the PBSO in the coming months by hosting a workshop on the regional dimensions of peacebuilding. We emphasize the importance of proper coordination between the peacebuilding architecture and civilian capacity programmes in the aftermath of conflict, since so many cross-cutting issues exist between them, so as to maximize their outcome despite the limited resources available in the United Nations in general and the Peacebuilding Fund in particular.

The expertise available to the Peacebuilding Commission and the Fund after seven years of working on the ground represent an important resource, which should be used to achieve a breakthrough in the future. Egypt expresses its readiness to coordinate with the Peacebuilding Support Office and members of the Peacebuilding Commission to make peacebuilding programmes a true success story in Africa.

Mr. Travers (Canada): At the outset, let me express Canada's gratitude to Croatia and Brazil for the leadership they have provided as the outgoing and incoming Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) Chairs, respectively, and our appreciation to the Peacebuilding Support Office for its work supporting the Commission and managing the Peacebuilding Fund.

Today's debate occurs as we begin to turn our attention to the next review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, to be held in 2015. As the annual report (A/68/729) demonstrates, significant

work has been undertaken in the country-specific configurations. Partnerships with other United Nations bodies, the World Bank and regional organizations continue to deepen. Japan's stewardship of the Working Group on Lessons Learned has also steered the PBC towards issues and challenges that are more directly relevant to peacebuilding practice.

However, if we are honest, the PBC's overall record remains somewhat mixed. When the review process begins in earnest, questions will be raised about the impact in the field, the Peacebuilding Commission's comparative advantage and the pace of its development. There is a continuing need to demonstrate real and tangible results. That must be our collective focus. In that context, Canada would like to highlight four issues worthy of deeper consideration over the course of the coming year.

(*spoke in French*)

First, the country-specific configurations have gradually moved towards lighter and more flexible models. Expectations about the Peacebuilding Commission's ability to independently mobilize funds have also become more realistic. Both developments point towards an approach better suited to taking advantage of the diplomatic and political weight of an intergovernmental body in New York. The concept that the PBC is valuable as an actor capable of providing political accompaniment, including advocacy, convening and outreach functions, has now been recognized and needs to guide our future work. That concept is also at the heart of the approach Canada and Sierra Leone have jointly developed in the Sierra Leone configuration.

Secondly, the PBC has focused considerable energy on building its cooperation with other United Nations bodies and international institutions, with particular emphasis on the Security Council. Those are important partnerships, and that work should continue. It is increasingly clear, however, that closer working relationships with the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the United Nations Development Programme and other entities of the United Nations system are also needed.

(*spoke in English*)

Thirdly, the transition processes under way in Sierra Leone and Burundi are important for several reasons. Most obviously, they are precedent-setting for the Peacebuilding Commission itself, and the lessons learned will undoubtedly inform similar planning in the future. The fact that the first two countries on the agenda are now on a trajectory towards becoming resilient States will allow the Peacebuilding Commission's engagement with them to come to a close, thereby freeing capacity to engage in new situations as required. However, this prospect should also prompt deliberation within the Commission about the level of demand from other States to take Sierra Leone and Burundi's place.

Fourthly, there is a need to better leverage the resources and expertise within the wider PBC membership. Aside from those directly engaged with a specific country situation, it is not always immediately clear to all Member States how they can best make a concrete contribution. The Commission's broad membership should produce more practical support for peacebuilding efforts in the field than it currently does.

Taken together, those issues suggest that the next review should be broad and deep. The year 2015 will provide a rare opportunity to make important course corrections. Therefore, the full range of issues affecting the peacebuilding architecture and its performance should be open for consideration. In particular, the PBC should be prepared to acknowledge that elements of the design agreed in 2005 may need reform, either because some of the initial assumptions no longer hold true or because the policy and institutional context has evolved in unexpected ways. As a committed supporter of the peacebuilding architecture from the outset, and by drawing on five years of practical experience as the Chair of a country-specific configuration, Canada stands prepared to contribute to that important process.

Mr. Nicola (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland welcomes the report of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on its work at its seventh session (A/68/729). We welcome its analytical approach, which is structured according to the main recommendations of the 2010 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. Illustrated by concrete examples of the six country-specific configurations of the Commission, the report identifies the main challenges and opportunities facing the PBC.

We are entirely in agreement with the main points of the report and will therefore confine our remarks to three points, relying in particular on our experience as Chair of the Burundi configuration of the PBC.

First, the notions of openness — or inclusivity — and national ownership, although central pillars of the work of the PBC, pose considerable challenges. As stated by the representative of Jordan during the debate on post-conflict peacebuilding in the Security Council last week (see S/PV.7143), in most societies emerging from conflict there is no cohesion to allow for any kind of ownership. The work of the PBC, which depends on the will of the Government in power, may sometimes be undermined by the concept of national ownership. We therefore need to think of innovative ways to respect the crucial need for national ownership while taking into account the specificities, characteristics and needs inherent to post-conflict societies. That is surely something that deserves our attention during the 2015 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture.

Secondly, the issue of United Nations transitions and the role of the PBC during those transitions remains a priority for Switzerland. It affects us directly, as Chair of the Burundi configuration, since the Security Council has decided to end the mandate of the United Nations Office in Burundi at the end of 2014.

A country's transition from the post-conflict phase to peacebuilding remains a critical moment. Ensuring a smooth transfer is an essential factor for preventing relapse into conflict. Thus, the central principle of the PBC is to avoid duplication of efforts. The mission on the ground must lead that process. The PBC can therefore play only a complementary role in support of the mission's efforts.

Nevertheless, a transition requires extensive coordination between several actors, the aim being that the responsibility that was once shouldered by the United Nations mission is now shared. Bilateral partners, neighbouring countries, regional organizations, the United Nations system and international financial institutions should take up the torch. The PBC, thanks to the great diversity of its members, has the ability to act as a platform that promotes coordination and coherence. It can play an advocacy and facilitation role, in particular by ensuring continued political support and promoting financial sustainability. We also welcome the initiative by Japan, as Chair of the Working Group on Lessons Learned, to conduct a substantive discussion on the issue of transitions, and we look forward to being closely involved in that process, which will also prepare the ground for the 2015 review.

Thirdly, we recall once again that the PBC needs to better enforce its role as the main forum for discussions on peacebuilding at the United Nations, given its unique composition, which includes the principal United Nations interest groups. We welcome in that regard the holding of its first meeting this year on 23 June. The PBC can and must act more actively so as to demonstrate that it deserves its place as the central United Nations institution for peacebuilding. For example, the potential of the Busan process for peacebuilding within the Group of Seven Plus and the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States should also be explored and discussed within the PBC. All six countries on the Commission's agenda have signed the New Deal.

Before concluding, allow me to say a few words on the Peacebuilding Fund, for its report (A/68/722) is also on today's agenda. We welcome the Fund's valuable contribution to promoting peacebuilding and are particularly pleased by the adoption of a third priority plan for peacebuilding in Burundi. We are also honoured to facilitate political backing for that plan as Chair of the Burundi configuration and will continue to support efforts to better coordinate the funding with similar instruments of the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme.

The year 2015 will be crucial for the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. Several representatives have reminded us of that. Following the 2010 review, a second review of the architecture is envisaged. Switzerland intends to use that opportunity to underscore the work undertaken and to consider ways to improve peacebuilding within the Organization. Despite such good work, we believe that we can always improve it. Switzerland therefore stands ready to actively contribute to the review.

In conclusion, we would like to express our sincere thanks to the outgoing Chair of the PBC, His Excellency Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak, who, moreover, facilitated the drafting of the report. We also thank Assistant Secretary-General Cheng-Hopkins and her team for their valuable work. At the same time, we wish Ambassador Patriota all the best for this year's chairmanship.

Mr. Langeland (Norway): Norway expresses its thanks for the 2013 report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/68/729). Norway also thanks the outgoing Chair of the Organizational Committee of

the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak. We welcome the Committee's new Chair, Ambassador Patriota of Brazil. Let me also join other speakers in thanking the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), led by Assistant Secretary-General Judy Cheng-Hopkins.

We are now approaching the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission. The United Nations peacebuilding architecture has demonstrated its added value. The PBC has, for the most part, fulfilled a crucial role in sustaining long-term attention to countries in terms of consolidating peace and of creating a conducive environment for their long-term sustainable development through its core functions of advocacy, resource mobilization and forging coherence.

At the same time, we should acknowledge that New York is a long way from the field. As the report states, the Commission is not positioned to coordinate operational activities in the field. Governments and the international community, through, for example, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, are the crucial actors at field level. It is encouraging to note the progress made in Sierra Leone and in Liberia. Despite the recent challenges, we hope that Burundi can move forward. We welcome the new Chair of the Central African Republic configuration and are ready to contribute to stabilizing the country so that it can truly embark on the path of reconciliation and peacebuilding.

Peacebuilding is complex and involves many stakeholders. Norway therefore welcomes the efforts to further strengthen partnerships within the United Nations with the international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society. However, there seems to be an issue as to how to operationalize such partnerships. Evidently, peace cannot be consolidated unless there is genuine national ownership, involving all sectors of the country concerned. In that respect, we emphasize in particular the role of women in the broad spectrum of peacebuilding, including economic empowerment. Norway calls for the full implementation of the Secretary-General's seven-point action plan on gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding.

Furthermore, there has been a considerable improvement in the way that the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) operates. Norway values the Fund's flexibility and readiness to take risks and to provide catalytic funding. Norway allocates annually $5 million to the PBF. We encourage other Member States to also contribute.

While much has been achieved with the PBC and the other components of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, there remains considerable room for improvement. The observations made in the report on the way forward for the PBC are constructive and sensible. At the same time, we must admit that those challenges are far from new. The 2015 comprehensive review provides us an opportunity to operationalize the necessary corrective measures. From a Norwegian perspective, the review will have to address the issue of transition from a country configuration to more traditional long-term development cooperation with the United Nations. A country configuration should not last indefinitely. Furthermore, we should explore how the PBC can address conflict and post-conflict situations in countries that are not formally on the its agenda. The PBC review cannot be limited only to the PBC, the PBF and the PBSO. We need a broader approach.

Finally, Norway looks forward to the first PBC annual session on 23 June and to contributing in the debate on sustainable support for peacebuilding — the domestic and international aspect.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda items 30 and 112. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 30 and 112.

Agenda item 115 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(f) Election of members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (A/68/778)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I would like to draw the attention of members to document A/68/778, in which the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations informs the President of the General Assembly that, according to the rotation agreement among the States members of the Group of Eastern European States for membership in the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, Ukraine is relinquishing its seat on the Commission in favour of Poland on the last day prior to the beginning of the forty-seventh session of the Commission, in July 2014.

As a result, a vacancy has occurred and a new member must therefore be elected to fill the unexpired term of office of Ukraine, which commenced in June 2010, on the first day of the forty-third session of the Commission.

As members are aware, in accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, all elections shall be held by secret ballot, and there shall be no nominations. However, I should like to recall paragraph 16 of decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should become standard, unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election. In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to the election on that basis?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): May I therefore take it that the Assembly wishes to declare Poland elected a member of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law for a term of office beginning on the first day of the forty-seventh session of the Commission, in July 2014, and expiring on the last day prior to the beginning of the forty-ninth session of the Commission, in 2016?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (f) of agenda item 115?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of agenda and allocation of items

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly now has before it reports of the Fifth Committee on sub-items (b) and (f) of agenda item 116, entitled "Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments".

In order for the Assembly to consider the reports of the Fifth Committee under those sub-items, it will be necessary to reopen the consideration of sub-items (b) and (f) of agenda item 116.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen its consideration of sub-items (b) and (f) of agenda item 116 and proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 116 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(b) Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/558/Add.1)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): In paragraph 3 of its report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint Mr. Edward Faris of the United States of America as a member of the Committee on Contributions for a term of office beginning on 26 March 2014 and ending on 31 December 2015, and Mr. Shigeki Sumi of Japan as a member of the Committee on Contributions for a term of office beginning on 1 April 2014 and ending on 31 December 2015.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint Mr. Edward Faris of the United States of America as a member of the Committee on Contributions for a term of office beginning on 26 March 2014 and ending on 31 December 2015, as well as to appoint Mr. Shigeki Sumi of Japan as a member of the Committee on Contributions for a term of office beginning on 1 April 2014 and ending on 31 December 2015?

It was so decided.

(f) Appointment of members of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/562/Add.2)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): In paragraph 3 of its report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint Ms. Patricia Arriagada of Chile as a member of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee for a three-year term of office beginning on 26 March 2014 and ending on 31 December 2016.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint Ms. Patricia Arriagada of Chile as a member of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee for a

three year term of office beginning on 26 March 2014 and ending on 31 December 2016?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-items (b) and (f) of agenda item 116?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.